

(a)

DIVISION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION

2005 Maximum Workers' Compensation Benefit Rates

Proposed Amendment: N.J.A.C. 12:235-1.6

Authorized By: Kevin P. McCabe, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Authority: N.J.S.A. 34:1-5, 34:1-20, 34:1A-3(e) and 34:15-12(a).

Calendar Reference: See Summary below for explanation of exception to calendar requirement.

Proposal Number: PRN 2004-332.

A public hearing on the proposed amendment will be held on the following date at the following location:

Friday, October 8, 2004

10:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

John Fitch Plaza

13th Floor Auditorium

Trenton, New Jersey

Please call the Office of Regulatory Services at (609) 292-7375 if you wish to be included on the list of speakers.

Submit written comments by November 6, 2004 to:

Frederick S. Cohen, Regulatory Officer

Office of Regulatory Services

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

PO Box 110—13th Floor

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0110

Fax: (609) 292-8246

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The agency proposal follows:

Summary

The proposed amendment to N.J.A.C. 12:235-1.6 establishes the 2005 maximum workers' compensation benefit rates for temporary disability, permanent total disability, permanent partial disability, and dependency under the Workers' Compensation Law.

Because a 60-day comment period has been provided on this notice of proposal, this notice is excepted from the rulemaking calendar requirement pursuant to N.J.A.C. 1:30-3.3(a)5.

Social Impact

The proposed amendment will ensure that payments to workers' compensation recipients entitled to maximum benefits will increase in line with the upward trend of wages in the State's economy, thus preserving the real purchasing power of their benefits.

Economic Impact

The proposed amendment will increase from \$650.00 to \$666.00 the weekly benefit rate received by individuals eligible for the maximum weekly benefit rate for temporary disability, permanent total disability, permanent partial disability, and dependency under the Workers' Compensation Law. The 2005 maximum benefit rate represents a 2.5 percent increase over the current maximum benefit rate.

This change will not raise employers' workers' compensation insurance costs. The Department does not expect to experience any economic impact as a result of the proposed amendment.

Federal Standards Statement

The proposed amendment does not contain any standards or requirements which exceed standards or requirements imposed by Federal law, as there are no applicable Federal standards or requirements. The amendment increases benefit rates to individuals. As a result, an explanation or analysis of the proposed amendment pursuant to Executive Order No. 27(1994) is not required.

Jobs Impact

The proposed amendment will have no impact on jobs in New Jersey. The Department does not anticipate an increase or decrease in jobs as a result of this amendment.

Agriculture Industry Impact

The proposed amendment will have no impact on the agriculture industry.

Regulatory Flexibility Statement

The proposed amendment does not impose any reporting, recordkeeping or compliance requirements on small businesses as that term is defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-16 et seq. The proposed amendment increases benefit rates to individuals. Thus, a regulatory flexibility analysis is not required.

Smart Growth Impact

The proposed amendment will not have any impact on the achievement of smart growth or the implementation of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Full text of the proposal follows (additions indicated in boldface **thus**; deletions indicated in brackets [thus]):

12:235-1.6 Maximum workers' compensation benefit rates

(a) In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 34:15-12(a), the maximum workers' compensation benefit rate for temporary disability, permanent total disability, permanent partial disability, and dependency is hereby promulgated as being [\$650.00] **\$666.00** per week.

(b) The maximum compensation shall be effective as to injuries occurring in the calendar year [2004] **2005**.